

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ABU DH 02139 080445Z
ACTION NEA-10

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: BBAK, BDIS, TC
SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR BONE FIDES: IDEA DESIGN GROUP ET AL

BEGIN SUMMARY: EMBASSY DUBAI OFFICE HAS BEEN APPROACHED BY
ENGINEER WORKING FOR UAE MINISTER DEFENSE SHAIKH MOHAMMED BIN RASHID
WITH REQUEST FOR BONE FIDES ON GROUP OF ARCHITECTS WHO MAY BE
CLOSE TO DEFAULT ON DESIGN OF PALACE AT HATTA AND LANDSCAPPING
OF SECOND PALACE IN DUBAI, PLUS FOUR SMALLER PROJECTS. THIS RE-
QUEST FOR INFORMATION RELATES TO A POSSIBLE TRADE DISPUTE WHICH
COULD ASSUME COMMERCIAL AND SOME POLITICAL IMPORTANCE GIVEN
MOHAMMED'S ROLE IN AWARDING FIRST MAJOR PROJECTS TO U.S. FIRMS EVER
GIVEN BY DUBAI GOVERNMENT. END SUMMARY

1. EMBASSY OFFICE HAS BEEN APPROACHED BY CHRISTOPHER DENNY,
TECHNICAL ADVISOR TO H.H. SHAIKH MOHAMMED BIN RASHID
AL MAKTOUM, UAE MINISTER OF DEFENSE, WITH A REQUEST FOR
INFORMATION ON BONE FIDES OF FIVE ARCHITECTURAL FIRMS: IDEA
DESIGN GROUP, DESIGN FIVE, AND SOUTHWEST DESIGN GROUP,
ALL LOCATED AT 900 NORTH TENTH ST; MCALLEN, TEXAS 78501
(TELEPHONE 512-687-8146); LANDSCAPE INTERNATIONAL, 1341
WEST MOCKINGBIRD LANE, DALLAS, TEXAS (NO TELEPHONE NUMBER
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AVAILABLE); AND D. W. ARP AND ASSOCIATES, BROWNSVILLE, TEXAS
(NO FURTHER DETAILS AVAILABLE).

2. BY MEANS THAT ARE NOT ALTOGETHER CLEAR, SHAIKH MOHAMMED BIN
RASHID OBTAINED THE NAME DENNIS W. ARP OF LANDSCAPE INTERNATIONAL
AS A "QUALIFIED" LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT AND RETAINED ARP TO DO THE
LANDSCAPING FOR 61-HECTARE GROUNDS OF A PALACE IN DUBAI, ACCORDING

TO DENNY, COMPLETED PLANS AND CONSTRUCTION DOCUMENTS WERE TO HAVE BEEN GIVEN TO MOHAMMED BY FEBRUARY. THESE ARE "ABOUT SEVENTY-FIVE PERCENT DONE" AND MOHAMMED HAS PAID "ONE HUNDRED PERCENT OF THE FEES." DENNY REPORTS.

3. ARP, WHO IS SAID TO BE A PARTNER IN D.W. ARP AND ASSOCIATES AS WELL AS IN LANDSCAPE INTERNATIONAL, CAME TO DUBAI FOR A FEW MONTHS IN 1977, LEAVING IN AUGUST 1977 FOR MEDICAL REASONS. ANOTHER PARTNER IN LANDSCAPE INTERNATIONAL IS SUPPOSEDLY ONE ERASMO ALVARADO, JR; WHO HAS VISITED CUBAI FROM TIME TO TIME DURING THE PAST YEAR. ALVARADO IS ALSO DESCRIBED AS PARTNER IN SOUTHWEST DESIGN GROUP, DESIGN FIVE, AND IDEA DESIGN GROUP. ALVARADO HAS ACCEPTED A COMMISSION TO PROVIDE "COMPLETE ARCHITECTURAL SERVICES" FOR A SECOND PALACE TO BE BUILT IN HATTA. ACCORDING TO DENNY, MUCH OF THE DESIGN HAS BEEN DONE BY OTHERS BUT BECAUSE OF DIFFICULTIES MENTIONED ABOVE WITH ARP AND LANDSCAPE INTERNATIONAL, DENNY IS WORRIED ABOUT OVERALL PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY SHOULD ANYTHING GO AMISS. DENNY STATES THAT ALVARADO HAS ALSO BEEN GIVEN FOUR OTHER SMALL JOBS BY MOHAMMED IN DUBAI.

4. IN PARTICULAR, MOHAMMED WOULD LIKE TO KNOW WHO ARE THE PARTNERS IN THE FIVE ARCHITECTURAL FIRMS LISTED PARA ONE; WHAT ARE THEIR PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS; ARE THEY OR ARE THEIR FIRMS LICENCED; DO THEY CARRY PROFESSIONAL INDEMNITY INSURANCE AGAINST MALPRACTICE CLAIMS; BANKING OR OTHER STANDARD UNCLASSIFIED

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CREDIT INFORMATION; AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION USDOC MAY HAVE OR OBTAIN ON THE FIVE FIRMS
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